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SECRET SECURITY INFORMATION

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Memorandum of Conversation

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SUBJECT: Circulation of MEDO Paper to Sponsoring Powers

PARTICIPANTS: Department of State

NE - Mr. Kopper
NEA - Mr. Daspit
S/P - Mr. Ferguson
British Embassy
Mr. Burrows
Mr. Bailey

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The representatives of the British Embassy called to learn the views of the Department concerning British circulation of the MEDO paper. They stated that the Foreign Office feels strongly that the circulation of the paper should be no longer delayed and proposed to make it available to the various sponsoring powers over the week end. They pointed out that it was already generally known that the US and the UK were discussing this subject and that further delay in circulating the paper would inevitably suggest that the two governments were conducting prolonged bilateral negotiations before the other sponsoring powers were consulted. They pointed out further that since the paper was to be circulated on British initiative as a British draft, it was neither necessary nor desirable that the US should be in complete agreement on all points; that, in fact, it would be preferable for the US to have amendments to propose at the time the paper was circulated.

The British were informed that there was as yet no final US position on the MEDO paper. While the draft tentatively agreed in London seemed to be acceptable to the Department, we had not as yet received Defense comments and had been informed that these comments would not be available before next week. We understood that the Defense Department would wish to have the document amended in some sections, but according to our information these amendments would not involve fundamental points. They were intended

intended primarily to clear certain ambiguities in the London draft. Thus with respect to the document as tentatively agreed in London, there was no great difficulty, either in the Department of State or the Department of Defense.

However, the amendments to this document subsequently proposed by the Foreign Office (Attachment A) create serious problems, and we would have to register strong objections to the circulation of a text which included these proposed amendments.

The principal concern of the Department was with the proposed amendments to paragraphs 6, 8, and 9 of the agreed London text. The effect of these amendments would be to provide for some type of formal liaison arrangement between NATO and MEDO while the new organization was in the initial planning stage, and to provide for direction by the members of the NATO standing group, under some variation of the two hat concept when the organization assumed Command functions. This proposal in effect reversed the principle agreed to in London that NATO - MEDO co-ordination and the provision of continuing direction to the MEDO bodies should be effected through an ad hoc arrangement, outside the formal organization, which would permit the co-ordination of the views of the US, UK, France and Turkey on a continuing basis. This arrangement avoided the serious difficulties involved in fixing the membership of a formal Steering Group, and yet should provide whatever guidance and co-ordination with NATO the MEDO required in its initial phase. When the organization assumed actual command functions, some more formal arrangement would doubtless be necessary. However, we felt it was premature to anticipate this issue now. It was possible that a directing organ would evolve naturally out of the developing experience of the organization.

The Department also found it impossible to agree to the amendment proposed to paragraph 14 of the London text. As drafted in London, the document provided an opportunity for reassessing the situation after the Arab States had been approached, and left flexible the exact manner in which the approach to these states should be made. The British representatives pointed out that their Ambassadors in the Middle East were strongly of the opinion that although the Arab States would probably not be willing to join the new organization at the outset, its establishment as a going concern would exert an attraction which might gradually overcome their resistance. For this reason, the British felt strongly that the possibility of a negative Arab reaction should not be permitted to deter the sponsoring powers from the establishment of the organization.

It was pointed out that the Department did not reject this thesis and was prepared to concede that it might be desirable to establish a Middle East Defense Organization in spite of a negative Arab reaction. Nevertheless, we felt the situation should be carefully considered at the time and for this reason did not find the language of the proposed amendment acceptable. The amendment

The amendment was also objectionable because it seemed to imply that the Arabs would be presented with a cut-and-dried proposal on a take-it or leave-it basis — an approach which our Mission Chiefs in the Near East had particularly warned against. We were convinced that the Near East States must be consulted before the form of the organization was finally frozen.

As to the proposed amendment to paragraph 5, concerning the location of the planning group, the Department had no particular objection. Since it was admittedly of no great significance, however, it seemed preferable to avoid it, leaving the document in the form in which it had been agreed in London.

In summary, the British were told that it would obviously be desirable for them to have the considered comments of the Defense Department in advance of the general circulation of the MEDO paper. If however the Foreign Office attached great importance to the prompt circulation of the paper, we thought that the use of the draft as tentatively agreed in London would create no great problem for the United States, it being understood that the US would have the right to propose amendments at the time of the general circulation. It was emphasized, however, that the incorporation in the London draft of the amendments currently proposed by Foreign Office would be most undesirable from the US point of view.

Attachments:

UK paper dated July 7, 1952.
UK paper dated July 15, 1952.

in Middle East file 7/7.

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